



September 25, 2008

**An open letter to Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama:**

Today, California is marking Stem Cell Awareness Day. For the millions who suffer from incurable diseases and injury, today is a day to celebrate the scientific advances made to-date and be hopeful of what is yet to come.

The research being accelerated by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) could one day offer stem cell derived therapies and cures for more than 70 currently incurable diseases and injuries. But no single state can provide the level of funding or the political will that is needed to ensure the long-term success of this vital medical research. Leadership and funding at the Federal level is desperately needed to ensure that we realize the benefits from what is one of the most promising fields of science in this century.

That is why we implore both Republican Sen. John McCain, and Democrat Sen. Barack Obama to commit their administration to *sustained* levels of funding for all biomedical research and in particular, to *all types of stem cell research*. We believe that if they answer this call to action, we will soon realize significant medical benefits for patients around the world and increase our ability to control health care costs here at home.

Earlier this month, a panel of experts convened by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences confirmed what stem cell researchers throughout the world know – that the use of embryonic stem cells is still necessary. They remain the gold standard. As the expert panel, chaired by Richard Hynes of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology stated “It is far from clear at this point which types cell types will prove to be the most useful for regenerative medicine, and it is likely that each will have some utility.”

By fully capitalizing on this area of scientific research, we have a chance to develop therapies and cures for a long list of serious diseases, injuries and genetic conditions, from cancer to spinal cord injury to Alzheimer's, and an opportunity to restore quality of life for these patients and their families. We also have an opportunity to save billions of dollars we now spend on lost productivity and medical care for these patients. Stem cell research also holds promise for developing powerful environmental toxicity tests, drug screening, and patient diagnostic tests that can help save lives and eliminate serious potential roadblocks on the road to faster, more effective clinical trials for all kinds of intractable conditions.

California is making a bold investment in the promise of stem cell research, but it is up to the new leadership in Washington to ensure we capitalize on the full potential this science holds for us all.

Sincerely,

Robert Klein  
Chairman  
Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee

Alan Trounson  
President